

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 06197 01 OF 02 080933Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 SSM-05 /073 W

-----010037 080946Z /13

R 080515Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9541

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 6197

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SA

SUBJ: SAUDI EDITORIAL ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE

FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED  
"WITH SUCH FRIENDS" IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LOCAL NEWSPAPER  
ARAB NEWS WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1977 FOR YOUR INFORMATION.  
COMMENT: IN THE PAST EDITORIAL WRITER JIHAD EL-KHAZEN  
HAS CONSISTENTLY BEEN IN TUNE WITH VIEWS OF HIGH RANKING  
SAUDI DECISIONS-MAKERS.

BEGIN TEXT: DIFFERENCES IN OPINION BETWEEN SYRIA  
AND THE OTHR CONFRONTATION AND SUPPORT STATES VOER  
THE PURSUIT OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE  
EAST TEND TO OBSCURE THE FACT THAT THESE VERY DIFFERENCES  
REFLECT A GROWING CONCENSUS AMONG THE ARABS THAT THE  
CHANCES OF A PEACE TALKS THIS YEAR ARE VERY DIM. SYRIA  
HAS BECOME THE FIRST COUNTRY TO INDICATE THAT IT IS  
JUMPING OFF THE SINKING SHIP. SHE HAS BEEN IN A  
STRANGE COMPANY ANYWAY SO THE CHANGE WILL NOT MEAN  
DEFECTION BUT RATHER A RETURN TO THE OLD RADICAL FOLD.  
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PAGE 02 JIDDA 06197 01 OF 02 080933Z

SYRIA HOWEVER, HAS NOT CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND IT. SO  
FAR, SYRIAN CRITICISM OF THE APPROACH TOWARD PEACE  
HAS BEEN MADE THROUGH A PALESTINIAN: ZUHEIR MOHSEN,  
LEADER OF SAIQA AND MEMBER OF SYRIA'S RULING BAATH  
PARTY'S REGIONAL COMMAND. THE SYRIANS MAY HAVE LEARNED  
A LESSON FROM THEIR LAST QUARREL WITH EGYPT FOLLOWING

THE SIGNING OF THE SECOND SIANI AGREEMENT IN EARLY 1975. OR THE BREAK IS STILL IN ITS FIRST STAGES AND SYRIA WILL EVENTUALLY CALL IN THE BIG GUNS TO BACK UP MR. MOHSEN'S FUSILLADE. A GREAT DEAL WILL DEPEND ON DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE COMING FEW WEEKS, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARDS TO THE U.S. GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION AND THE EXPECTED TALKS IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND HIS SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE. GIVEN A FAINT HOPE OF MEANINGFUL PEACE TALKS, THE SYRIANS MAY DECIDE TO LEAVE SECOND PARTIES LIKE MR. MOHSEN AND A FEW MINOR POLITICIANS IN BEIRUT, TO DO THE CRITICISM. BUT IF THEY BECOME FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT HELP THE SEARCH FOR PEACE THEY WILL OPEN UP AGAINST THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND EVERY ARAB COUNTRY THAT DEALS WITH THE AMERICANS. IN THIS KIND OF INTER-ARAB FEUD THE SYRIANS ARE PAST-MASTERS.

BUT THE ARAB COUNTRIES THAT ARE LEFT ON THE PEACE TALKS SINKING SHIP MAY ENVY SYRIA ITS ABILITY TO MANEUVER AND REGRET THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE LEFT THEMSELVES WITHOUT A LIFEJACKET. THERE IS A GROWING PESSIMISM AMONG THE MODERATE ARAB STATES THAT THERE WILL BE NO NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE HIGH HOPES THAT WERE AT ONE TIME PINNED ON THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION ARE BEING REPLACED BY SEVERE DISILLUSIONMENT. AFTER STARTING PROMISINGLY, PRESIDENT CARTER APPEARS TO BE UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 JIDDA 06197 01 OF 02 080933Z

SUCCUMBING TO HIS OWN INEXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN POLITICS. UNLIKE SYRIA, THE MODERATES HAVE NO WAY TO GO.

WHAT WORRIES THE ARAB MODERATES MOST IS THE INSTED OF FIGHTING BACK, PRESIDENT CARTER IS ACTING VERY STRANGELY. IN HIS LAST STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST. PRESIDENT CARTER ADMINTTED LACK OF PROGRESS AND THEN ADDED THAT UNLESS THE PARTIES CONCERNED SHOWED A READINESS TO REACH AGREEMENT, HIS GOVERNMENT MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO DEVOTE AS MUCH TIME IN THE FUTURE TO THE PROBLEM. AS IT STANDS, THE PRESIDENT'S REMARK MEANS THAT HE HAS BEEN PROMOTING PEACE TALKS IN THEMIDDLE EAST OUT OF THE GOODNESS OF HIS HEART, THAT HIS COUNTRY AND ITS ALLIES HAVE NO DIRECT INTEREST IN MIDDLE EASTERN PEACE, AND THAT IN VIEW OF THE INGRATITUDE OF THE PARTIES IN THE REGION HE MAY CALL OF HIS ATTEMPTS AND SEEK TO HELP OTHER COUNTRIES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD WHICH MAY BE MORE RECEPTIVE TO THE GOOD SAMARITAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 06197 02 OF 02 080939Z  
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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 JIDDA 6197

THE WAY WE SEE IT, THE U.S. IS BASICALLY HELPING  
ITSELF AND ITS ALLIES IN WESTERN EUROPE AND JAPAN IN  
PROMOTING A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THERE  
IS NO QUESTION THAT THE U.S. IS SEARCHING FOR A SETTLE-  
MENT AS A FAVOR TO THE ARABS OR ISRAELIS. SHOULD  
ANOTHER WAR BREAK OUT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THE ARABS AND  
ISRAELIS WILL SUFFER BUT SO WILL THE U.S. WESTERN  
EUROPE AND JAPAN AS THE FLOW OF OIL AND TRADE LINES ARE  
DISRUPTED. WESTERN EUROPE AND JAPAN MAY BE WORSE OFF IN  
THE EVENT OF A FIFTH WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST THAN THE  
ARABS AND ISRAELIS THEMSELVES. WEAKER WESTERN EUROPEAN  
ECONOMIES COULD WELL COLLAPSE.

STILL PRESIDENT CARTER IS NOT THREATENING TO PUSH THE  
LOCAL PARTIES TOWARD PRODUCTIVE PEACE TALKS BUT RATHER  
TO LEAVE THEM ON THEIR OWN. WE STRONGLY FEEL THAT IF  
HE HIMSELF STOPS TO THINK AGAIN ABOUT HIS OWN POSITION  
HE WILL REALIZE THAT IT CAN BE DANGEROUSLY COUNTER-  
PRODUCTIVE AND POSSIBLY DESTRUCTIVE.

BUT ASSUMING THAT PRESIDENT CARTER DOES NOT SEE OR IS  
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PAGE 02 JIDDA 06197 02 OF 02 080939Z

NOT ADVISED THAT HIS REMARKS ARE NON SEQUITUR WHAT WOULD

HAPPEN NEXT? THE MIDDLE EAST CAN LAST ONLY FOR SO LONG WITHOUT PEACE OR WAR. IF PEACE IS UNATTAINABLE, SOONER OR LATER THERE WILL BE ANOTHER WAR. WE HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED THE RISKS TO THE WORLD IN THE EVENT OF WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST BUT WHAT ABOUT THE RISKS TO THE FIGHTERS? IF THE MODERATE ARAB COUNTRIES WIN THE WAR OR FIGHT TO A DRAW THEY ARE SAVED AND THEY DO NOT NEED THE U.S. IF ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY SUFFER HEAVY LOSSES THEY WILL HAVE TO BLAME THEIR DEFEAT ON THE U.S. ASSUMING THAT THEIR REGIMES CAN SURVIVE A LOSING WAR.

EITHER WAY THE U.S. LOSES AND IT SEEMS (TO EVERYONE PERHAPS EXCEPT PRESIDENT CARTER) THAT THE U.S. MUST DO SOMETHING IN DEFENSE OF ITS OWN INTERESTS RATHER THAN IN APPRECIATION OF OUR BLUE (BLACK) EYES. AT THE MOMENT, THE SITUATION IS NOT ENCOURAGING. PRESIDENT CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICY RECORD IS DISMAL INDEED, VERY UNLIKE HIS HOME RECORD. HE HAS DONE POORLY IN THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE RUSSIANS, HE HAS FAILED TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND HE IS ALLOWING A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO SLIP THROUGH HIS FINGER IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. SINCE VIETNAM, THE U.S. HAS MADE NON-INTERVENTION A CORNERSTONE IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY, THAT'S FAIR. BUT IT HAS PUBLICIZED THIS ASPECT OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY SO MUCH THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE MADE IT A FACTOR IN THEIR FOREIGN POLICY. THIS EXPLAINS THEIR BOLD VENTURES IN AFRICA TODAY. UNTIL A FEW YEARS AGO SOVIET RUSSIA NEVER DIRECTLY INTERFERED OVERSEAS WHILE THE U.S. WAS EVERYWHERE. NOW THE ROLES HAVE BEEN REVERSED. NO ONE IS ASKING THE U.S. TO EMBARK ON MILITARY ADVENTURES OF THE DULLES-NIXON VARIETY BUT IT COULD AT LEAST STAND ACTIVELY IN THE FACE OF SOVIET

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 JIDDA 06197 02 OF 02 080939Z

ADVENTURES. IT CAN, FOR EXAMPLE, WIN SOMALI FRIENDSHIP OVERNIGHT AND ENSURE THE SECURITY OF THE RED SEA REGION. IT CAN DO MANY THINGS.

AND IT WILL BE DOING NO ONE A FAVOR BUT ITSELF.  
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## Message Attributes

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